belonging to a family in which Prince Ghazan Khán had been fostered, and who had thus acquired the extra land, etc., which is the recognized recompense for fostering royalty. We supposed that it was a desire to live up to this distinguished new connection (possibly it was a stipulation of the bride's people) that prompted his intention to set the young son, Kamber, up in a house of his own instead of bringing the new wife to share the parents' home.

Whatever lay behind this departure from custom, Nadíro sent his Hérul Nisa one day to tell me that he was setting out to "smite his poplars" if I would care to come. It was a *very* hot morning and I was deep in something else, but of course you'd never see anything if you weren't ready to take chances as they turn up. So I shouldered my camera and tripod, seized my long walking-stick (which is a great aid to climbing walls or leaping down them), on which I had made notches every foot to serve for measuring distances, and set off with Hérul Nisa. "Where is father's poplar garden?" I asked. The Aliábád people have a bewildering way of possessing odd scraps of ground dotted about all over the place, just according as they have taken up one plot or another of the sometime royal land. "Oh, quite near," she said. Everything is "quite near" to these active people, who think less of a 500-foot climb than we think of running a hundred yards to the pillar-box at the corner. It was, in fact, a hot, vertical half-mile over the roughest ground without even a track. Here on a rugged patch of stony, steep-sloping ground, carefully walled in, I found the whole of No. 8 and several neighbours busily setting about the felling job. One man scrambled up and attached a rope near the top of the fated tree. Two or three laid hold of the rope and stood at some distance to pull in the right direction, while the old Ustád himself skilfully hacked a triangular bite out of the trunk near to the ground and then axed away. It was only a few minutes till the slender poplar crashed down. Then Kamber and his friends hacked off the few remaining uppermost branches—the lower ones had been cut long ago—and the womenfolk and young people all clustered along the trunk to peel off the bark, taking care to get it off in strips as long

2: Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1939 AV7 Burusho AV7

and wide as possible; for bark strips are useful for many things. Some of the flakes were 3 or 4 feet long and 8 or 9 inches wide. They would be kept to make large drum-like containers for storage purposes. While the men proceeded to deal with the next tree, the women and young people filled shoulder baskets with chips and twigs and branches and carried them home to store. "Lots of firewood for a long time to come," smiled Bibi Anjir to me gleefully as she limped away as fast and as surefooted as a girl, despite the stiff leg.

I helped, of course, with gathering up the firewood and the bark, but I was never allowed to shoulder a basket. I would have done it gladly enough many a time, but what with silly shoes (which always provoked my companions' sympathy: "It would be so much easier for you to walk safely barefoot, Mother"; I wondered, seeing that my incompetent, soft feet had been for half a century encased in foolish footgear!) and unpractised muscles a cross-country scramble unladen required all my attention. In any case, however, they would never hear of my carrying anything—"the Great must not do that," they said, and as we were enjoying so many privileges of "the Great," we had to pay the recognized penalties.

When the trees were all prostrate, I measured the effective poles that remained and found they ran from 50 to 60 feet: the original trees must have stood 60 or 70 feet high. The Ustád had put the saplings in himself when he walled and planted the "garden" twenty years or so before. Good timber like this is a sound investment. Sixteen good poplars go to the making of a house; up to twenty may be needed if they are smaller. If people are definitely quitting an old house for a new they will dismantle the former for the sake of rafters and cupboards, and you will occasionally see the shell of an old house standing derelict. But the cases of house-building which we actually came across were the hiving-off of son or brother and required new wood. A man who has no trees of his own to cut must, of course, buy them from some neighbour, and this, with the carpentry, will be the major expense.

The Ustád had already levelled the ground for the new house beside his own, and soon the trenches were dug for the foun-

7:Tobe C, T-3 (1959) 1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

roasting or broiling, in Hunza most of the foods are eaten raw or lightly cooked.

To me, at least, the reason was plain and clear . . . they have little or no fuel. Coal is unknown, wood extremely hard to get . . . they have to go a long way to find a bit of forest or woodland. I saw practically none in the Hunza area. In another area I visited—Punial—one could see a few trees and copses that represented their woodlands. But timber suitable for firewood was not within reach of the people of Hunza. The bit of wood they did get would most likely come from an apricot or other fruit tree that had outlived its usefulness.

One of the most important reasons that apricots have become such an important part in the Hunzan diet is the fact that, by having found or created early, mid-season and late varieties, the Hunzan season for apricots extends two full months. This is a most vital consideration and is well worth remembering.

The staple oil or fat of the people is apricot oil. Ghee is used regularly, but butter can only be afforded and used on special occasions.

During the entire summer seldom, if ever, is meat served or seen on an average Hunzan's table, but during the three hard winter months (December, January and February) meat or chicken is sometimes used, if available (which is seldom). Even then, it is used only by the more prosperous or wealthy people. The poorer people can't afford to kill their cattle and use them for beef except on special occasions or religious holidays.

When I say the poorer people, I should qualify this statement, for there are no class distinctions whatsoever in Hunza. However, there are those families who own but one acre of land and there are those who own 10 acres. Therefore it is to be expected that there would be a difference in their living standards.